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# Poisoning our Child

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REFERENCE BOOK

*taken from the Library*

WHAT DOES LEAD POISONING DO?

ARE THE SOURCES OF LEAD?

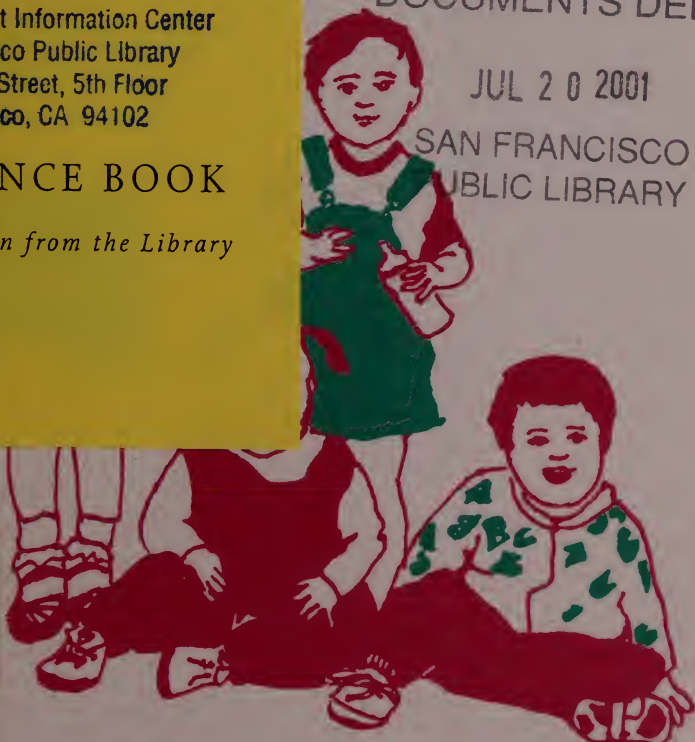
WAYS TO CONTROL LEAD

WHERE TO CALL FOR HELP

DOCUMENTS DEPT.

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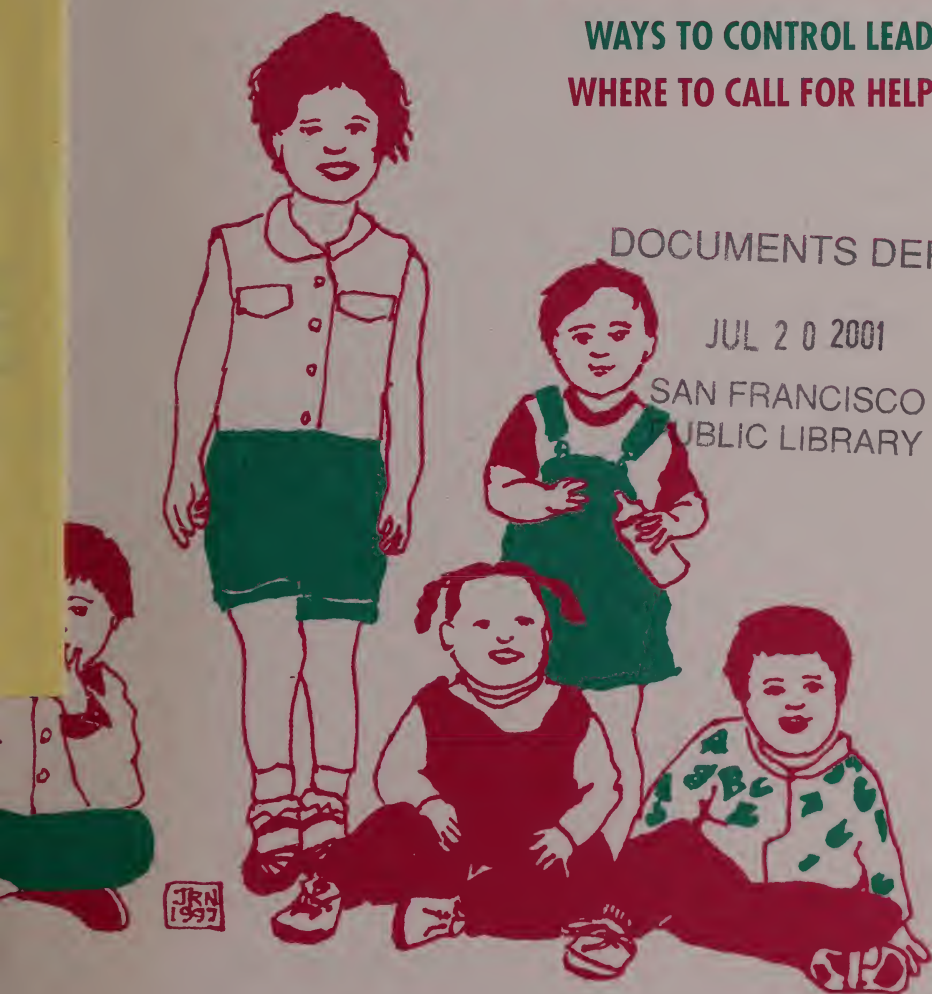
# 10 Steps to Prevent Lead Poisoning in Your Child

**WHAT DOES LEAD POISONING DO?**

**WHAT ARE THE SOURCES OF LEAD?**

**WAYS TO CONTROL LEAD**

**WHERE TO CALL FOR HELP**



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## What You Need to Know about Lead Poisoning

- **Any child** can be at risk and be harmed by lead poisoning because there are many sources of lead. Even small amounts of lead can harm young children because their bodies absorb more lead than adults do.
- **Lead enters** the body when children touch and then swallow lead dust, soil or paint chips as they play or crawl on the floor.

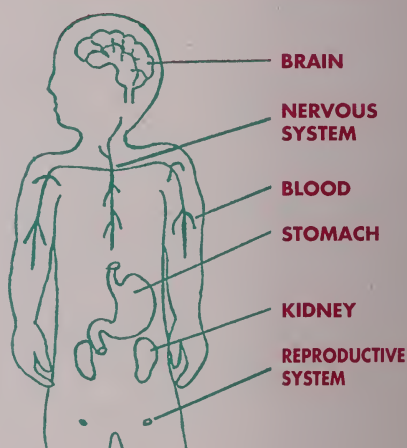
- **Even at** low levels, lead can harm:
  - the nervous system and the brain
  - the ability to learn and concentrate
  - a child's behavior, making it hard to sit still
  - the ability to hear well
  - growth

- **A child** with lead poisoning may not look sick. However, some children may experience:

- stomachache
- poor appetite
- hyperactivity
- anemia
- headaches

- **The only way** to find out if a child has lead poisoning is a blood lead test.

### HOW LEAD AFFECTS THE BODY



## Your Child's Health And Well Being

### STEP 1 - FIND A FAMILY DOCTOR FOR YOUR CHILD AND ASK FOR A BLOOD LEAD TEST

**T**he Child Health and Disability Prevention Program (at ☎ 554-9950) can refer low to moderate income families to free care if your family qualifies. Their “well-child” program includes a free lead test for all one and two year olds, or for all children under six who have never been tested. If your child is six months to six years of age, ask your doctor for a blood lead test.

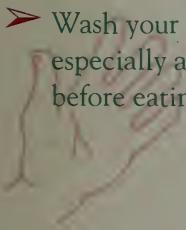
Your child's test may be venous or capillary. In a venous test, blood is drawn from a vein in the child's arm or hand. In the capillary method blood is drawn from the child's finger. Please observe which test your child receives.

### STEP 2 - KEEP YOUR CHILD FROM HAVING CONTACT WITH THE SOURCES

- Make sure your child eats foods rich in **calcium** (milk, cheese, yogurt, broccoli, greens, corn tortillas, tofu) and **iron** (meat, chicken, iron-fortified cereals, raisins, dried fruit). Fresh fruits and vegetables also help protect your child from lead absorption.



- Wash your child's hands and face often. Wash their hands especially after they play outside or near window sills, and before eating or drinking.





- When your child is teething, provide clean rubber teething objects. **Prevent your child from teething on any painted wood in the home, such as window sills.**



- Keep pacifiers, teething and other toys that touch your child's mouth clean by washing them often with soapy water. Rinse them well.
- Lead stains, paint and varnishes taste sweet. Make sure your child doesn't eat paint chips or flakes, or suck and lick varnished or stained surfaces.



## *Lead Around Your House*

### **STEP 3 - KNOW THE SOURCES OF LEAD**

#### ■ **PAINT, DUST AND SOIL**

**P**aint is the main source of lead in homes built before 1978. Paint chips, dust and soil are the most common causes of child lead poisoning.



#### ■ **WATER**

**L**ead in water is usually due to the lead leaching from newer brass faucet fixtures and the corrosion of the lead solder used on copper pipes until the 1980's.

**Here are two ways you can use to prevent lead contamination in the water you drink:** Let the **cold** water run for a minute in the mornings, or when you have not used it for a few hours and use **only cold** water for drinking or cooking.



Water testing is available for \$25.00 from the San Francisco Water Department. Call ☎ **650-871-5950** if you would like a brochure and application.

Water testing is also available for \$16.50 from the Environmental Law Foundation. Call their hotline at ☎ **510-208-4557** for information. You can also obtain other kits to test paint, soil, dust and ceramics.

## ■ HANDMADE AND IMPORTED CERAMICS AND DISHWARE



**C**eramic imports from many countries may have lead-containing pigments and glazes that can dissolve in food. Handmade ceramics from the U.S. may also have lead glazes.

You can use color testing kits to test your ceramics. Buy these kits at hardware and home repair stores. Call ☎ **554-8930** if you would like a list of vendors.

Some Mexican bean pots (ollas) and casserole dishes (casuelas), as well as Chinese “Longevity” and other dishes often have lead varnish or glaze. This lead can dissolve in the food and cause dangerous exposure to lead. **Do not use your ollas and casuelas or the Chinese “Longevity” dishes for cooking or storage if they test positive.** Call the California Tableware Education and Enforcement Program for information at ☎ **800-644-5323**.

## ■ CHINA, CRYSTALWARE AND WINE FOILS

**L**ead crystalware and pewter products can also contribute significant lead to the diet, if in contact with acidic



food or drink. Call Prop 65 Hotline ☎ **(916) 445-6900**. Many wine bottle foils contain lead. Do not let children touch that wrap around the mouth of the bottles.

Call the Environmental Defense Fund at ☎ **510-658-8008** for a pamphlet listing china patterns available without lead. China displayed in stores with a yellow triangle tells consumers that the dishes have lead levels above Proposition 65 warning levels.

## ■ IMPORTED CANS, FOODS AND CANDIES

**T**he seals of some imported cans are welded with lead-containing solder. Lead seals are visible as seams raised surfaces. Check your imported food cans and **do not buy any with lead seals**.

Mexican tamarindo candies sold in small clay pots (Picarindo brand) were recalled by United States Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) in the past because of lead content.

For more information, contact the Department of Health Services Food and Drug Branch at ☎ **916-445-2263**. The recalls are time-limited, and often the unsafe product is related to production.

## ■ IMPORTED COSMETICS



**S**ome imported commercial brands of Surmi, Surma, Kajal, Khuli, Khali and Kohl used for eyeliner and eye health care for infants contain very high lead levels. The US FDA is now trying to block these imports.





## ■ DANGEROUS HOME REMEDIES, OR TRADITIONAL MEDICINES

**Azarcón** and **Greta** are orange and yellow powders used in Mexico as home remedies. Both powders contain high lead levels and can cause lead poisoning. Some families use them to treat stomachaches. Call ☎ **554-8930** for **brochures** in *English or Spanish*.



Some members of the Hmong community use a red powder, Paylooah, for rash or fever. Some South Asians use Ghasard, Bala, Goli or Kandu for stomachaches. All of these products have dangerous amounts of lead, and can cause lead poisoning.

**Please don't use these remedies! They have caused childhood lead poisoning!**

## ■ HOBBIES, HOME INDUSTRIES AND TOYS

**Lead** problems can occur from: casting fishing weights, bullets, lead used for stained glass windows, ceramic glazes in pottery, jewelry making, home plumbing and soldering projects. Even helium balloons sometimes come with a lead weight attached.

Some brands of crayons have been recalled by the US Consumer Product Safety Commission because of their lead content. Buy only crayons in boxes that are labeled **"Conforms to ASTM D-4236."**



## ■ DON'T BRING LEAD DUST HOME FROM WORK

**B**e aware that battery recycling or dismantling, radiator repair, plumbing repairs, or prep work before painting cause harmful exposures to lead dust or lead fumes. Use good hygiene practices. Change your clothes and shoes, wash your hands, and shower when you are done with a job.



For more information, call the Department of Health Services  
Occupational Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at

 **510/540-3448.**

## *How to Control Lead Hazards in Your Home*

### **STEP 4 - LOOK FOR LEAD PAINT AND DUST INSIDE AND OUTSIDE YOUR HOME**

**L**ook at the condition of paint inside and outside your home. Do you have paint from before 1978? Is the paint cracking, flaking, or peeling? These conditions create lead dust. It is important to regularly clean surfaces where lead dust may accumulate.

### **STEP 5 - CONTROL LEAD DUST WHEN YOU DO REPAIRS AND RENOVATIONS**

**R**epairing or removing damaged paint requires special training and methods to avoid spreading contaminated lead dust around. Before you do any repairs or renovations, be sure to test the paint for lead content and hire a certified contractor to do the work.



**The results** of the lab let you know if lead dust may be produced when these surfaces are disturbed. If there is lead dust, plan with your contractor how to control it during the repairs.



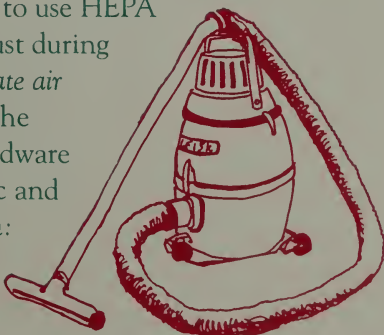
**Find out** if your contractor is certified to work with lead and how he or she will address the following issues:

- ✓ What will the contractor do to avoid creating dust?
- ✓ What will the contractor do to enclose, control and contain dust?
- ✓ What will the contractor do to ensure thorough clean up after finishing the job?
- ✓ How will the contractor deal with any wastes produced?



Contractors must use safe methods of paint scraping and disposable tarps to collect scrapings. Misting the surface before scraping keeps lead dust from spreading and assures that the moist scrapings will fall on the tarp. Put the paint scrapings in a bag for disposal before the debris dries out.

**Trained** contractors know how to use HEPA vacuums to collect all the fine dust during cleanup. A *high efficiency particulate air* (HEPA) filter can remove even the smallest dust particles. Cole Hardware rents these vacuums to the public and contractors. Call at either location:  
956 Cole Street ☎ **753-2653**  
or 3312 Mission Street  
☎ **647-8700.**



**To be sure that the clean up is complete, take some dust wipe samples on these surfaces and send them to a lab for analysis.**

**Protect** yourself if you do these home repairs yourself, or if your job exposes you to lead dust. Be aware that you bring lead dust home on your clothes, exposed skin, hair, shoes and inside your car. Change clothes and shoes, and wash up before you leave work. If possible, shower before going home.



**City College** of San Francisco offers short lead hazard awareness courses and a 40-hour lead abatement training to certify construction workers. Take a class and learn how to control lead dust when doing home repairs. Call the State's Lead-Related Construction Line at ☎ **1-800-597-5323** for information on all accredited classes.

## **STEP 6 - CLEANING LEAD DUST FROM THE FLOOR AND OTHER SURFACES**

**Keep** lead dust out of your home as much as possible. Place doormats at all entrances to the house. Teach your children to use them to remove dust from their shoes. Some people remove shoes when they enter the house and use house slippers instead. This prevents street dust from coming into the home.



**Children** spend much of their time on the floor. Because lead dust is heavy and sticky, it is difficult to clean from floors and other surfaces. Mop every week with water and detergent. Dust with a moist rag, a sponge or baby wet-wipes. You can use



baby wet-wipes to clean lead dust from window sills and other surfaces by doing the following:

1. Take a clean baby wet-wipe and place it flat on a hard, dirty surface. Use a firm pressure and an S-shaped motion to wipe a small part of the area to be cleaned.
2. Fold the wet-wipe in half making sure that the dirty side is on the inside.
3. Wipe the same area a second time using the clean side of the folded wipe.
4. Throw the dirty wipe into a plastic trash bag.

For instructions on how to clean dust from floors, windows and other surfaces, call: ☎ **554-8930**.

## **STEP 7 - CARE FOR CARPETS WITH LEAD DUST IN MIND**

**L**ead dust may be trapped when it is tracked from other locations. Are you concerned about lead dust in your carpet because your child crawls or plays there? One solution is to cover the carpet with a clean sheet or a washable floor cover. A better solution, however, is to rent a HEPA vacuum, or to use an allergy-type vacuum cleaner bag. You can buy the allergy-type bags in many hardware stores that sell vacuum bags.



**Removing carpets produces a lot of dust. If you must remove them, be sure to spray them with water before ripping them up.** The moisture will help



the dust stay in the carpet. Roll the carpet up carefully. Immediately wrap it up and haul it away.

## STEP 8 - OPENING AND CLOSING WINDOWS AND DOORS MAY CREATE LEAD DUST



**L**ift up the window sash and look at the window sill area under the sash. Do you see paint dust, chips or flakes? Every time you open or close a window, some dust is created. One way to prevent this is to put special plastic liners along the edges of the window sash. Wipe clean this area with

moist rags, sponges or baby wet-wipes and throw away these items after one use.

**I**f doors are not hung the right way, the painted surfaces will rub together and create dust. To prevent this problem, plane the door carefully, to avoid making dust. Then re-hang the door. A quarter coin should pass up and down the gap between the door and frame when the door is closed.

## *How to Spot and Control Lead Hazards in Your Yard*

### STEP 9 - TEST THE SOIL IN YOUR YARD FOR LEAD

**B**ecause children often play in the yard, they can be at risk for lead poisoning. Look at your yard. If the soil is dry and without ground cover, your child may be exposed to lead in the soil and dust. Exterior peeling paint can also get into the soil. You can test the lead content in the soil. Call



**☎ 554-8930** if you would like a pamphlet on soil testing and a list of labs, or call the S.F. League of Urban Gardeners (SLUG) testing program at **☎ 285-7584** for more information.

## **STEP 10 - YOU CAN FIX YOUR SOIL IN THE YARD**

**I**f your soil has lead levels above 200 to 400 parts per million (ppm), you can fix it by putting down a permanent barrier material or by adding three to six inches of new topsoil. Then plant a stable ground cover. As an alternative, cover the new topsoil with gravel, stones or bark. Call SLUG for further information at **☎ 285-7584**.

**I**f you remove soil with very high lead levels (1000 ppm or greater), the soil must be treated as "Hazardous Waste." Call the Department of Toxic Substances Control at **☎ 510-540-2122** for instructions.









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